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Heart Heart PARENTS

Time = Love To A Child

Nothing builds a relationship with a child than spending time with them doing fun activities or teaching them a skill. The investment of your time and energy says, *you are important to me and I love you*. The foundation of *Heart 2 Heart Parenting* is the investment of your time and energy to build a satisfying, meaningful and enjoyable relationship **together** with your child.

Ever since Dr. David Elkind, cautioned parents about consequences of loading adult expectations onto children, in his ground breaking book, The Hurried Child released over a quarter of a century ago, parents have suffered from the guilt and anxiety of not measuring up to the fabled balancing act required of modern day parents. In his newer introduction, Dr. Elkind warns that childhood obesity, school violence, media messages through technology and the general commercialization of childhood are redefining children and parenting. Parents often feel caught between preparing children for the future and protecting them from societal ills.

It may seem counter intuitive to keep a list of possible spontaneous activities to cultivate but the truth is, many of us simply aren't good at letting go and having fun. Review the list below as a reminder to seize the moments of summer and enjoy each other. The list is meant to help you watch for and *catch the moments as they come or create the memories of a more carefree childhood together*. Add to the list to make your own homespun memories.

1. Play in the rain and enjoy your child's smiles and giggles.
2. Wash the car and squirt each other with the water hose.
3. Cook together and don't worry about the mess.
4. Read books side by side on the porch, drinking lemonade.
5. Journal side by side in the backyard or in a park.
6. Sing each other's favorite songs while watering your yard.

7. Lay down on a blanket outside (picnic style) and watch the clouds go by, tell each other the shapes you see. Make up cloud stories and praise your child's imagination.
8. Buy a new box of crayons and draw portraits of each other.
9. Pack a picnic lunch and go to the park to eat. See where the day takes you.
10. Make a bird feeder and sit still outside to watch the birds feed.
11. Tell stories to each other with the listener providing the first line and characters to the storyteller.
12. Make or buy bubbles. Blow bubbles in the backyard.
13. Make your own frozen popsicles with your favorite fruit juices, eat them outside on a hot summer's day. Let the juice drip down your arms and then squirt each other off with the water hose.
14. Turn on the sprinkler in the backyard and run through it, over and over and over again.
15. Paint something!
16. If it's too hot to play outside, put on your favorite music and rock out together!
17. Get your groove on and give your kids a spontaneous dance lesson. Show them the dance craze from your schooldays.
18. Read a book together.
19. Do chalk art on your driveway or sidewalk together.
20. Wash the dog together and squirt each other.

Parenting Exercise: Have a fun together for 15 minutes at least once a day! Remember only to focus on your child for those 15 minutes. It is likely that discipline issues will lessen as a result of focused time together. Share your ideas with us!

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